CNT-AIT MADRID FACE EVICTION

BELFAST ANTI-RACIST DEMONSTRATION—9 AUGUST

BELFAST LEISURE CENTRES STRIKE

BLACK STAR

WAR OR FREEDOM?

OPPOSING THE APOCALYPSE

Headlines across the world every now and then suggest peace is about to break out in both Ukraine and Palestine, with Russian, Ukrainian, Palestinian and Israeli talks and negotiations apparently about to succeed. We won't hold our collective breath. Peace in the capitalist world is but a prelude to further war and more often it is a façade designed to fool people that what used to be called the 'great powers' have our best interests at heart. We know that war is the health of the state, its very lifeblood used to justify its existence, expansion, and the continued repression of all opposition to its patriotic and capitalist mission. We see this with the criminalisation of direct action, civil disobedience and even solidarity with those involved in these tactics against war and genocide across the world. They, like us, know that we are all in the anti-war movement in the front line of the campaign to prevent what seems like an inexorable slide towards nuclear holocaust. Conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine are on extremely dangerous strategic fault lines that threaten to not merely de-stabilise a region, as we so often hear, but to open the possibility to global annihilation. All parties have nuclear weapons or are allied to powers that have and will use them safe in the knowledge that their elites will be protected in their bunkers. In fact, a willingness to 'press the button' is these days seen as a positive attribute of national leadership. We have to oppose this madness collectively and internationally, not simply in solidarity with individual countries, but in a global anti-war movement.

SYNDICALISTS & THE STATE VS ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS?

On Saturday, 9 August, *Organise! Friends of the IWA-AIT* held a public meeting in Belfast in solidarity with our besieged comrades in the CNT-AIT who face eviction from their historic premises in Tirso de Molina in Madrid.

This is the result of court action taken against them by their former comrades in the CNT-CIT who have set upon a path of transforming themselves into a centralised, mainstream business union that has trade marked its name on a red and black logo. They are trying to crush those who remain committed to the organising practices of anarcho-syndicalism, direct action, mutual aid, solidarity and the goal of anarchist social revolution.

This is only the beginning, the CNT-CIT are intent on destroying the last vestige of anarcho-syndicalism not just in Madrid but across the territory controlled by the Spanish state. Local CNT-AIT unions across Spain are also facing eviction from their historic premises.

The shameless actions of the CIT union in Spain who have been trying to usurp the property of the CNT-AIT are clear as they use the state to attack the anarcho-syndicalist tradition in Spain.

The CIT union in Madrid has its own headquarters and doesn't need another. They cannot maintain it and it has always been the unions of CNT-AIT Madrid which have paid for and maintained these premises. As the CNT-AIT Madrid put it:

These are spaces that serve not only as anarcho-syndicalist headquarters, but also as centres for broader social struggles, for spreading anarchist culture and ideas, and as refuge for people brutalised or persecuted by police and the State.

The CNT-AIT in Madrid had indeed engaged in dialogue - dialogue that was cut off by the CIT with no explanation. It is clear that the CIT prefer profits to pay their professional union bureaucrats over dialogue and anarchist principles.

These principles are clear: places belong to those who have worked to maintain them, paid to maintain them and actually use them. We do not support private property and landlord tactics.

Such actions clearly break with the traditions of anarcho-communism, in favour of some bourgeois legalistic mentality.

The Continental American Workers' Association (in Spanish the Asociación Continental Americana de Trabajadores - ACAT) has called for a boycott of all the affiliates to the CIT globally. Affiliates of the CIT are the CNT-CIT (Spain), EZE (Greece), IP (Poland), IWW North America (USA and Canada), IWW WISERA (Wales, England, Scotland and Ireland), FAU Germany, FORA-CIT (Argentina), USI (Italy).

Shame on them and shame on the poseurs who try to legitimise this disgusting behaviour.

See the previous issue of Black Star for more information.

If You See Someone Shoplifting in a Supermarket NO YOU DIDN'T - DON'T BE A ONE QUID TOUT!

As the cost of living crisis for the poor continues to bite some of the more resourceful among us have taken up shoplifting to help feed ourselves, our families and to take a bit of the pressure off on our exorbitant subsidies to the rich (rent, the pirate landlords like to call it). In response Iceland are trying to turn some of us into one quid touts!

If the tout's report is verified by staff they get a quid added to their customer bonus card. They also get the feeling of being a scabby lowlife tout that a quid just won't get out in the wash. Whether you work, shop or shoplift in Iceland times are tough and getting tougher.

Tell Iceland to fuck off!

ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS AT FOYLE PRIDE

Members of Organise! IWA attended Foyle Pride in Derry on Saturday 23rd August. It's one of our favourite Pride events on the island.

While members of Organise! attended the first Belfast Pride 'dander' in 1991 and many of the subsequent parades Derry's Pride has been a consistent favourite from it started in 1993. Both have grown almost beyond all recognition from the early small but essential events back when it seemed religious nutcases could outnumber us. These events have grown in number across the North and in the numbers attending them. While Belfast has been swamped with corporate sponsorship and was marred a number of years back when the committee clamped down on any protest at the inclusion of cops on the parade things didn't develop in the same direction in Derry.

Refreshingly free from corporate sponsorship or cops taking part in the parade it was an added bonus that the executive parties had been told to stay away this year.

Alliance, the DUP, Sinn Fein and the UUP had been told by organisers they were not welcome to take part due to the executive's decision to extend the ban on puberty blockers for trans kids - a decision that had also been taken by other Pride organising committees across the North.

This year, despite the progress that has happened since the early 90s the importance of Pride as a Protest is necessarily being reasserted given the current backlash against trans rights and queer youth.

BELFAST ANTI-RACIST DEMO Ten Square 9th August

Organise! attended the anti-racist counter demo to far right picket of Ten Square in Belfast city centre. They called the picket as one of the owners' other hotels, the Chimney Corner in Newtownabbey is 'accused' of housing asylum seekers. When we first arrived we could only see far right demonstrators. It was a pretty tense stand-off particularly for the first half hour. Police numbers were minimal compared to the regular 'set piece' standoffs in front of the city hall. At the start we stood on the opposite side of the road from the far right with Militant CWI and NIPSA. The bulk of the counter demo was to our left cutting across the street. The idea was to keep the racists nervous and protested against on 2 flanks. After a short time the police cut us off from the rest of the counter-demo by forming a line across the street that left us eyeball to eyeball with the far-right demonstrators who claimed that we were all paid to be there (!), that the illegals would come for us and that we were all middle-class.

United Against Racism (UAR) suggested we move behind the police line, which we eventually did as a group with NIPSA and the CWI - refusing to split the increasingly isolated section of the counter-protest leaving anyone more vulnerable to attack from an increasingly hostile crowd of racists.

While things were more evenly matched than usual for Belfast the anti racists still outnumbered the far right. The closer proximity to the racist demonstration may have put a number of anti-racists off joining the counter-demo. It's clear that a lot of these mostly working class demonstrators are buying into far right myths and lies about immigration and immigrants and that neither the left nor unions have much in the way of a presence in the areas most of them are from.

After being repeatedly drowned out by anti-racist chants and sporadic singing of Bella Ciao the far right retreated at around 2.30pm and began to disperse. They were jeered as they went. There were a couple of speeches from our side and people began dispersing. As the crowd grew thinner a couple of wankers who had been on the far right demo were attempting to mingle with people who were leaving. Undoubtedly to attempt to set people up for ambush as they left the area. Stay safe.

ARRESTS and IMPUNITY

While the far-right organise with impunity - from the PSNI adopting a stand off approach during racist riots earlier this summer (and on other occasions when the police stood back and watched as immigrants and their shops were attacked) to tolerance of threats of murder made during their demonstrations - the approach to anti-war, anti-racist and left-wing demonstrators that could not be more different.

Labour's proscription of Palestine Action has directly led to harassment and (as we write around 500) arrests for simply wearing t-shirts. Anti-racist demos are hemmed in and heavily surveilled by both the police and the far-right. The far-right are directly encouraged in their thinking and actions by politicians, government and the media to the extent that their racism passes for 'common-sense'.

The state is encouraging the sowing of racist division while attacking the living standards of workers, attacking the trans community, attacking the most vulnerable in society through benefits 'reform', facilitating genocide, ramping up militarism, evicting working-class tenants in the midst of a housing 'crisis', and misdirecting the anger of large sections of the working-class into racism and bigotry.

The racists and the far-right perform a valuable function for the wealthy and powerful. As long as they remain useful to the state, the state will not act in any meaningful manner against them. This has to be recognised. The solution to it is NOT to demand more police powers of detention and repression - which will be used against us more quickly than against incipient fascism.

We must make inroads into working-class communities that have been abandoned and neglected in order to make the arguments that our enemies are not migrants but the politicians and the powerful elites. This is the only basis upon which we can build effective opposition to the racists and to capital and the state.

FAR RIGHT ORGANISERS AT RACIST PICKET OF TEN SQUARE BELFAST

Pictured above, the organiser of the picket of Ten Square Stephen Baker (who was later seen front and centre at the Jesus march in Belfast on Saturday 23rd August) and Neil Pinkerton 'leader' of Division One, a group of racists who have been conducting nighttime racist street patrols in East Belfast. The aptly named Pinkerton recently managed to walk from court on animal cruelty charges.

WHOSE STREETS? OUR STREETS?

The racist's retreat from their picket of Ten Square was a victory, however it was not a victory that we were allowed to enjoy for too long.

The chants of "Whose streets? Our streets" came from both sides. In the city centre we may have won the day but on the streets of Rathcoole that evening it was a different matter. A racist attack there saw two cars torched, graffiti sprayed on and a window smashed at a house in East Way in the estate. The family, including three young children were 'left shaken' by the attack according to the press. Other racist demos outside the city centre also took place.

Isolated fascists can be beaten up quite easily in Beechmount, or Guildhall Square but we need a class based response to tackle the growing racist nationalism in both of the 'main' working-class communities here. The reality is that there is no organised working-class alternative that can counter racist lies, stop racists attacks or provide an alternative that can and will fight for the working-class as a class.

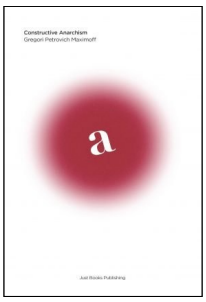
The absence however does not mean that we cannot build one. This won't come through the revitalising of the lie of political representation on behalf of the working-class in any parliament. It will come from the building of an independent, revolutionary working-class movement - a union - in our communities and workplaces. Controlled by working-class people, from all backgrounds, for working-class people.

Such an organisation must recognise that neither the government, police, politicians, bosses nor NGOs will save us and that the only way to ensure that we get the share of the wealth we all helped create, a world where we can halt environmental destruction, stop racism, dismantle patriarchy, end war, end oppression and exploitation is a world in which we have destroyed capitalism and the state.

Fuck this pointless and divisive 'reclaiming' of national flags - these are the rags that bind us to narratives that divide us along lines that are counter to our class interests. We need to reclaim our streets, our communities, our workplaces and ultimately the whole world.

Just Books Publishing

Just Books Publishing, set up by the Just Books Collective, has so far published its first two titles.



The first is a reprint of Gregori Maximoff's *Constructive Anarchism*, to mark the 100th year of existence of the International Workers Association (IWA) the Anarcho-Syndicalist international founded in Berlin in 1922.

isbn 9781739723705

£7.99

The second title, now with a new cover, is Nick Heath's *The Idea. Anarchist Communism: Past, Present and Future* - a welcome and new comprehensive work on anarchist communism, this book seeks to rehabilitate the current of anarchist-communism. To make it better known and understood.

...a good substantial book, and much needed. Lucidly written, it provides a rich brew of engaging discussions of the 'Idea' (anarchist communism as a political philosophy), interesting vignettes of many individual anarchists, and a great historical account of the many anarchist communist organisations over the past 150 years… (Brian Morris on *The Idea)*

isbn 9781739723712

£15.00

Available from:

https://organiseanarchistsireland.com/shop/

Russia and Ukraine Victory to the Deserters

Members of the *International Workers Association* who knew David Chichkan personally mourned his death when they heard the former anarchist and artist, who had dedicated 20 years of his life to anarchism, was killed by Russian forces on 9 August near Zaporizhzhia in south east Ukraine. David's funeral was attended by many waving black anarchist flags in a procession that formed up behind a coffin carried by uniformed members of the Ukrainian army draped in a Ukrainian flag. A strange anarcho-state funeral.

Like many other former anarchists the Russian invasion of Ukraine saw David join the Ukrainian military to fight off the invasion while making comparisons with the struggle of anarcho-syndicalist militias against the Francoist coup in Spain in 1936 and with the actions of the Makhnovists in Ukraine during the 'Russian' Revolution. We can admire their former commitment to anarchism and even understand how they could conclude that there was no alternative but to fight an invading power. Nonetheless the manner in which 'anarchists' in Ukraine have chosen to do so is a clear break with anarchism. Anarchism is internationalist, based on the class struggle and has a long anti-militarist tradition. Joining the state military on either side of this conflict is not the type of opposition to imperialism we favour. Both Russia and Ukraine are increasingly authoritarian states clamping down on workers and minorities and this war is making both states more and more authoritarian and nationalist.

Pointing out the contradictions between going off to die as fodder for a state that does not care less for the interests of workers, the poor or minorities has seen anti-militarists attacked, doxed and their anti-war activities dangerously exposed by pro-war so-called anarchists. They have been falsely accused of 'campism' for opposing the imperialism of both Russia and NATO. While former comrades are churned up by the war machine 'anarchist' warmongering has been used to silence other anarchist voices. No-one knows the 'reality' of imperialism it has been claimed.

Documented evidence of 'anarchists' encouraging the rush to join the Ukrainian military has unearthed a dodgy rabble of 'national' and patriotic 'anarchists' with links to fascism as well as outright fascists. The Russian invasion saw a number of anarchist groups call for arms and other support for anarchists who had joined military formations attached to the Ukrainian army. The discovery that this solidarity was also going to fascist and right wing groups within the military was suppressed by groups like Vrije Bond and others who demanded the unquestioned solidarity of anarchists across the globe. Among those supporting the membership of anarchists in the Ukrainian military was Belgian 'anarchist' volunteer, Jacques Martin. It was his "anarchist beliefs" that led him to join the Ukrainian military. "We will fight for freedom. I am an anarchist and I have fought for her repeatedly. For example I was in the legion in Croatia. I can't sit around and do nothing. Russians are killing innocent civilians, so I am going to kill Russians." This blanket declaration that as an anarchist you are going to "kill Russians", without distinction is anathema to anarchist ideology. However Jacques is no anarchist, Belgian media interviewed him in his home where posters from Otto Strasser's *Combat Community of Revolutionary National Socialists* and the Belgian Nazi volunteer unit *Corps Franc Wallonie* adorned his wall.

Meanwhile in three and a half years of war the Russian state has prosecuted at least 18,500 deserters - both sides are finding it hard to deal with deserters. Victory to deserters, war saboteurs and anti-militarist resisters - in Russia, Ukraine and everywhere. David's death is a tragedy, as is the death of every worker sacrificed at the altar of militarism by states and nations across the globe.

Leisure Centre Workers Strike

Belfast leisure centre workers took part in a 24 hour strike on 12 August demanding a £1 an hour increase in their wages. They are the most poorly paid of leisure centre workers across the North and tried to reach agreement with their bosses, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) last month. GLL is a London-based social enterprise in which the workers are supposed to be the owners. It was set up as a not-for-profit co-operative in 1993 by the local authority in Greenwich to take over leisure centres when Tory cuts threatened to close them and put the workers on the dole. Since then, it has expanded into a multi-million pound business with fat cat salaries to boot for its executives and runs leisure facilities as well as libraries for councils across England. GLL took over the running of all 14 leisure centres and two gyms owned by Belfast City Council about a decade ago. Since then, workers have seen their pay stagnate and it lags behind similar workers by about 13 to 15%, an absolute fucking disgrace and yet another example of what Belfast City Council think of its employees as well as the rate payers.

GLL faced serious opposition from workers and communities to its library takeover in London more than ten years ago. At the time, its Chief Executive revealed his own salary as £155,000 and claimed their use of casualised contracts was a reflection of public demand. Claiming that he was a member of Unite and that scab labour had been 'intimidated' when crossing picket lines by other Unite members, GLL, which trades under the name 'Better', and its boss have regularly been in conflict with the unions ever since. A pay dispute back in 2019 lasted more than six months and recent years have seen the company's image and practices come under increasing criticism, sometimes even by the no-mark Labour councillors who still sit on their board.

This is how not to do co-operatives. When these initially hopeful and radical initiatives morph into ill-defined 'social enterprises' with a mixed public-private ethos, a professional bureaucratic management board, and partner up with the parasites of the business sector, they are just another enemy in the way. Talk continues in the background that the threatened break-up of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive will lead to those other social enterprises, housing associations sweeping up the stock, or as the Shinners have mooted, the Housing Executive will become a mutual, very much on the basis of the disgraced effort in Rochdale that took over the council housing there. These enterprises are about as close to the Rochdale principles of co-operativism as Belfast City Council is to the Limerick Soviet.

All power to the leisure centre workers in their struggle and solidarity with anyone unfortunate enough to call GLL or 'Better' their employer. Co-op, my arse!

MEETING AT THE (A) CENTRE

Meanwhile... in Ballymena

The fall-out from the race riots here in Ballymena in June seems to rumble on depressingly. The cops are still on the look-out for some of those involved and a parade of mug shots have appeared in the local press that would put the denizens of Mordor to shame. There are also a crowd of arseholes still hanging around the area like the fuckwit patrol of East Belfast vigilantes. Recent headlines spoke of a terrified Roma family of 11 people and a two year old wean hiding for hours in their attic when the house was stormed by 'concerned residents' during the riots. Meanwhile there was a guy up in court in Ballymena the other week charged with stalking, intimidating and even inserting secret cameras into the bedroom of a young woman who had separated from him. Unsurprisingly, there were no pickets or protests against that creepy bastard or the 85 year old man charged with the rape of a girl soon after by those who claim to be defending women and girls.

Despite all this shite, the local community is trying to heal things with a 'family fun day' for Clonavon and Kinhilt Streets on Saturday 23 August. Thank fuck for a bit of sanity and as long as they can stick wee Wullie Drennan singing for a few hours, all will be well again.

Get Involved: Help Build A Working Class Alternative.

ORGANISE!

FRIENDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' ASSOCIATION · AMIGOS DE LA ASOCIACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DE LAS Y LOS TRABAJADORES

WWW.ORGANISEANARCHISTSIRELAND.COM

Organise! is an anarcho-syndicalist group in Ireland which is affiliated to the International Worker's Association as 'friends of' section. We take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, and particularly the history and tradition of struggle epitomised by the IWA - the anarcho-syndicalist international. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small, but growing, group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities and workplaces torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – ill-health, stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to survive; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatises, imprisons and deports the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore our website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Cork, Derry, Dublin, Lisburn, Monaghan, Newry, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We have a new Local in Formation in South Ulster. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid. Every member is an active member.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to: organiseasi@gmail.com